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## AMERICAN ART NEWS

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### The "Modernist" Art Movement

Editor AMERICAN ART NEWS,  
Dear Sir:

In the ART NEWS of May 3 your correspondent, "E. G.," desires more light on some observations I made in my letter that appeared in your Apr. 26 issue. The purpose of my letter was, of course, an endeavor to refute the idea that the "Modernist" movement in art is waning, or that it is a fad that is passing, as the ART NEWS expressed it. I agree with E. G. that the "new vision" is as old as Minoan art, or, as I implied in my letter, as old as the early Christian art. The new vision is always in the nature of a revival, and we have had these awakening periods intermittently from the earliest times down to the present. I also agree with E. G. that you will find an art expression, "modernist," if you please, among the Polynesians, and among other undeveloped races. And I believe that in many cases this embryonic art is a truer art expression than the scholastic in art expresses today.

Does E. G. seriously ask what is meant by scholasticism in art? Webster defines the word thus: The scholastic point of view; formalism. Now I will ask E. G. if it is not true that formalism in art always announces a decadent period in art? Formalism is the letter of art that killeth, and, obversely, modernism is the spirit that quickeneth. Again, does E. G. seriously ask what is to be purged out of the old school? Then I would answer: Conservatism, reactionism, prejudice, narrowness, ignorance, intolerance, old fogysm, pharisaism, so-called culture (sometimes spelt with a "k"), unwillingness to become a little child. I hope that all will read carefully what George Bellows says in the admirable article appearing in the same issue with E. G.'s letter.

Very sincerely yours,

Wm. Bradford Green.

Hartford, Conn., May 12, 1919.

## ART DEALERS ASS'N SPEED UP

Little has been heard of late of the American Art Dealers Association, organized a year ago with what seemed to be universal goodwill and a feeling that the art trade in America, which alone of all businesses had no Chamber of Commerce or mutual fraternal and protective organization, should "get together." It will be remembered that the initial meetings of the new association at the Gotham Hotel were largely attended, and that it was launched under what seemed, at the time, to be most auspicious conditions; that a constitution was adopted, officers chosen and a committee sent to Washington to endeavor to prevent the insertion in the present Revenue bill of the onerous and injurious tax on art. While this committee was only successful in preventing a tax on the potteries, rugs, carpets, textiles and tapestries, which most interested some of its own and the association's members, and through the efforts of W. A. Coffin, who represented the artists, happily stopped any tax on the work of living artists—it was not blamed for its lack of success.

The art tax question settled, the association apparently lapsed into inactivity, and we are informed that no meetings have been called and no business transacted, and, in fact, that there has been and is "nothing doing."

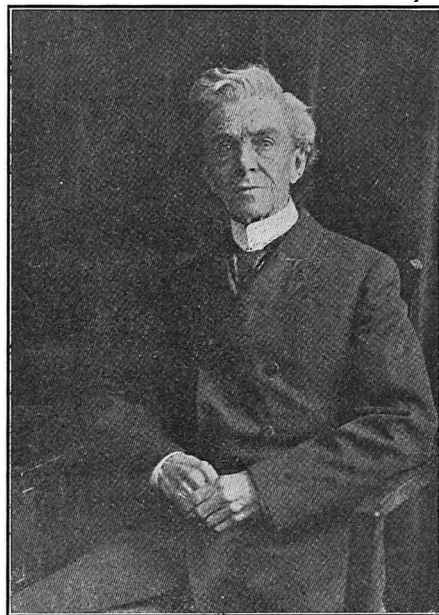
All this inactivity on the part of an organization which it was universally fondly and, we think, rightly, believed would be of the greatest aid to the art trade in this country, seems to us most regrettable. There were skeptics at the initial organization meetings of the association, who asserted, even if in whispers, that the personal jealousies and enmities which have for many years been the curse of the art trade in this country, and which have been of serious injury to said trade, would prevent any permanent success of the association. The ART NEWS, which had something to do with the formation of the organization—honestly believing such an organization to be greatly needed—did not follow these critics and pessimists at the time, and is loath to even now believe their predictions will be found correct.

Is it too late, President Knoedler, to call a meeting of the association, to have reports from the treasurer and other officers, and to not only wake up the association, but speed up its work? Why should an organization, formed primarily to bring about good, to replace bad feeling in the art trade, to act for the benefit of not only the art trade, but all American art interests, be allowed to die from inanition, or worse, from the revival or continuance of the often petty jealousies and enmities which it had been thought and hoped would be done away with by fraternal association?

### HEARD ON THE AVENUE

A well known Fifth Ave. art dealer bewailed the Peace Treaty when recently handed to the Germans at Versailles, as follows: "Strange—this treaty doesn't appear to satisfy anyone—even the Germans don't like it."

## OBITUARY



E. L. HENRY

Photo by Jessie Tarbox Beals.

Edward Lamson Henry, the veteran Academician, one of the best and widely known of modern American painters, and whose pictures are in almost every leading collection of American paintings and their reproductions in countless American homes, died at his home, Ellenville, N. Y. Sunday last, aged 78. He had been ailing for some time past, and spent the winter in Florida, but was too weak to paint.

The artist was born in South Carolina in 1841 and displayed marked art taste as a youth, so that in early life he was sent to Phila. and later to Paris to study. Although he studied here and abroad under various masters, for a time under Courbet, he did not remain long enough a pupil to have his style noticeably influenced by any one of these. Returning to America in the late sixties, he settled in N. Y. where he remained. Some years ago he joined the artists' summer colony at Cragmoor near Ellenville, N. Y., where he built a handsome studio.

Mr. Henry was elected an Academician in 1870 and in all the years rarely failed to exhibit one or more examples of his popular art at the Academy displays. His first important picture, and one which really brought him his deserved reputation, as the painter of the late Colonial and post-revolutionary periods, especially of the early years of the XIX century, was the "Railway station—New England," sold from the John Taylor Johnson sale in 1876, to Mr. John W. Garrett of Baltimore for \$530. Perhaps his fame more surely rests, however, on his long panel, so familiar through colored reproductions of "The First Railroad Train on the Mohawk and Hudson—now the N. Y. Central R. R.," which hangs in the rooms of the Historical Society at Albany. This carefully studied and historical work gained him the title of the "Frith of America"—from the fact that the early and mid-Victorian English painter of that name gained his fame, in turn, from his paintings of the "Railway Station" and "Derby Day."

Some critics have considered Henry more an illustrator than a painter as he dealt with minute details and carefully finished his canvases to the end, like his early fellows of the old Hudson River school—but this estimate is hardly a fair one, for he had the true artistic feeling and temperament, and there was generally a vein of sentiment in his work. He was all his life a close student of early American customs, costumes and life, and had an unusual collection of Colonial and later costumes, objects, furniture and even carriages of all sorts, which he used to advantage in his painting. His interiors of the Colonial and later periods with figures, as well as his outdoors, with always some scene of rural life depicted—the old stage coaches, the primeval buggies, the buckboards, etc., were perfect in detail, and correct to the extreme in every way. Some of his best remembered works were: "The Old Corner Cupboard," "City Point, Va.—Grant's Headquarters" (in the Union League Club, N. Y.), "The Oncestral Home," "Off for the Races," "Battle of Germantown," "Departing for War," "Meeting of Washington and Rochambeau," "Old Clock on the Station," "Reception to Lafayette," "A French Diligence," "Middle Dutch Church" and "Departure of the Brighton Coach." To the last Spring Academy he sent "A River Landing," which sold for \$375, and "Leaving at early morning in a Northeaster" (a picture of old stage coach days), which brought \$400.

A typical example of the artist was bequeathed to the Metropolitan Museum some years ago by Morris K. Jesup. He won hon. mention at the Paris Exposition

in 1889; bronze medal in 1891; medal in New Orleans in 1885, and Chicago in 1893; bronze medal at Buffalo in 1901; silver medal at Charleston in 1902, and bronze medal at St. Louis in 1904.

But not only as an artist but a man will "dear old E. L. Henry" be mourned by a host of friends. He had a rarely gentle nature, and a kindly temperament which is well described by Will H. Low in a most appreciative notice of the dead painter—unfortunately too long to quote in entirety, published in the Evening Post of Monday last. Mr. Low says in substance:

"To many of his colleagues as to me Henry's demise has a peculiar sense of surprise mingled with our sorrow for the loss of his cheerful personality, owing to his sustained appearance of youthfulness, his unvarying interest in forms of art, but little akin to his own, and above all the sense of something lacking when we will search the Academy exhibition in vain for his work. This will remain, however, unique and apart from the general trend, a typical American product little affected by his early training in France, devoted to the perpetuation of truly national types, and forming, when the day comes for its better appreciation, a life work of which an American artist may well be proud."

"To the degree of his modest demands, Mr. Henry has always had his public with him, and his work thus disseminated must have given pleasure and even evoked in many a responsive chord of that Americanism to which the events of the past five years have recalled us all. In this last respect there exists a distinct prototype in France in the work of Boilly."

"With such patriotic interest can we regard Mr. Henry's art, that our Metropolitan Museum could hardly undertake a more pious task than in assembling a really comprehensive exhibition of his varied work; varied indeed more than is generally realized, though always related to our American life."

"Without claiming for Mr. Henry a dominant place, there are few American Artists who have better served their country in preserving for the future the quaint and provincial aspects of a life which has all but disappeared since we have become the melting pot for other races than our own."

The artist's funeral took place on Tuesday last at Ellenville. He is survived by his devoted wife, to whom in her bereavement the Art News extends its sincere sympathy.

### Mrs. John S. Wise, Jr.

Mrs. Sarah Morris Green Wise, sculptress and wife of John S. Wise, Jr., died Thursday last in her N. Y. studio, after a short illness. During the war she had laid aside her modelling tools and turned over her studio, as a place of entertainment for soldiers and sailors under the title of the "Rendezvous des Poilus." Here, in memory of her son, Lieut. Jack M. Wright, killed in an airplane accident in France, Mrs. Wise devoted her time to making enjoyable the visits of men in the army and navy. Her death was hastened by the loss of her son, who was one of the youngest aviators in the service, only 19 at the time of his death. He was also known as the author of "The Poet of the Air."

Mrs. Wise, who was better known under the name of Green, was recently elected to the National Sculpture Society because of original work exhibited at the Paris Salon. She was born in Oneta, Ill., in 1877. She studied in Paris under Rodin.

### Thatcher M. Adams

The death last Sunday at his N. Y. residence, at an advanced age, of Thatcher M. Adams has received scant notice in the dailies, and yet Mr. Adams was for many years, a prominent figure in the Metropolitan business, club and art worlds and was also long identified with the summer colony at Lenox, Mass., where he had a handsome residence. He was President of the Institute for the blind, and a member of the Union, Metropolitan and other clubs.

As an art collector, Mr. Thatcher was well known and his tall, slim figure and kindly face, framed in snow white hair and beard, were familiar to all frequenters of the Galleries and auction rooms. He assembled a choice collection of pictures, chiefly of the early English school, which he most favored, and was for many years a patron and friend of the late T. J. Blakeslee. His pictures will probably come on the auction mart next season.

### Evangeline Wilbour Blashfield

"Ave atque vale"

Friend, journey on and in thy hand with thee—

For that thou didst thy light awhile impart  
And leave to us a compass and a chart  
That we in the weary labyrinth might see—  
Take all our thanks for thy humanity!  
Servant of Beauty, Muse to every art,  
Thine was the noble culture of the heart  
That bade us love and learn and so be free.  
Thee in thine unimaginable home we hail!  
Where'er thy spirit dwells, look back afar!

Lo! where thy footsteps like a shining trail  
Across the dim earth's ways, lead to a star.  
Through such as thou shall Wisdom yet prevail!

And men shall know what Truth and Beauty are.

Antoinette Rotan Peterson.

The Evangeline Wilbour Blashfield Memorial Fountain, the gift to the city of the Municipal Art Society, was unveiled Tuesday aft. last, at the Queensboro Bridge Market. At the time of Mrs. Blashfield's sudden death, a few months ago, she was much interested in the plans for the fountain, the society's gift to the city.